

Statewide:

A man, a college, a lodge— all dedicated to future Masonic leaders

The man is Herbert Lloyd Wilkerson.

The college is Wilkerson College.

The lodge is Wilkerson College 760.

Even Brother Wilkerson makes the mistake of viewing his career as Marine Major General as “past.” In fact, it forms the steel framework of his position today as leader among leaders.

North Carolinians think of him as Commanding General of Camp Lejeune Marine Corps base. The military world relates him to combat in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, from CG of the Third Marine Division and CG of the III Marine Amphibious Force in the Far East. They know he led the NC Governor’s Commission for Military Affairs for ten years and as author of *History of Military Lodges in Freemasonry*.

If Masons issued ribbons of honor like the military, the left side of Wilkerson’s chest would match the right. Fraternal decorations would come from lodges, Montfort Medalists, Scottish and York Rites, the Shrine, DeMolay, Jesters and many other Masonic-related organizations and foundations which he leads or has led in both action and honorary capacities.

He has mentored scores of young men and women throughout his life who admire him in quite another way.

With Brother Wilkerson as Master and namesake, Wilkerson College held its inaugural session March 1, 2002, at a rustic camp deep in the backwoods of Granville County near the Masonic Home for Children. The concept of such a college had come from both the Grand Lodge and NC Scottish Rite Orient. The idea was to provide the fraternity with the finest possible leaders, now and always.

They invited lodge deacons to network and learn from one another. They met three times in three months in three places: MHC, MESH and GL. They experienced classroom sessions, homework assignments, spontaneous talks, e-mail traffic and phone discussions.

That, in turn, generated camaraderie to continue after their college lives. They were all hungry for more knowledge, more direction. They wanted to form a new lodge, the first in NC in 20 years. All eyes turned to Wilkerson as its first Master.

In seeking a charter they made it known they wished to be a traveling lodge, holding meetings across the state. The first was held at the Grand Lodge in Raleigh. Formal petition was made June 15, 2002, to Grand Master Jerry Tillet. More than a hundred attended the opening ceremony a month later in Cary. First stated communication took place at MESH August 3 with 40 attending. WM Wilkerson read no fewer than 20 petitions, a history-making number.

The new lodge met for the first time after its official charter October 5 at Blackmer 127 in Mt. Gilead. Then meetings were held in Wilmington, Stokesdale, Charlotte and Greensboro.

The year 2003 began with an esteemed membership whose experience would be the envy of any lodge in the world. In addition to the original 17 Wilkerson College participants who became deacons and wardens in local lodges, Wilkerson College Lodge 760 enjoyed as members one Grand Master, five Past Grand Masters, one Deputy Grand Master, one Past Deputy Grand Master, one Grand Steward, one Grand Tyler, one Grand Orator, four District Deputy Grand Masters, two District Deputy Grand Lecturers, one Master, 16 Past Masters and six certified lecturers.



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